

May 15, 1960

V. P. RICHARD NIXON INTERVIEWED

Open End with David Susskind at 10:00 P.M. over WNTA-TV
(Newark, N. J.):

Guest: Vice President Richard Nixon

THE SCREEN SHOWED V. P. RICHARD NIXON

AND DAVID SUSSKIND SEATED IN THE STUDIO.

SUSSKIND: "I wondered if we might begin tonight by the issue that's on everybody's tongue and mind these days, the issue of the U-2 plane and aerial reconnaissance. There are aspects of that situation that deeply trouble many people in the country. Your presence gives us the chance to explore the problem a bit.

"One of the things that comes to my mind about that incident is the connotation of the incident, that it had -- that there was, in our government, a lack of coordinated planning and intelligence in the sense that this situation persevered at an exquisitely bad time, on the very eve of the summit conference. It would seem to indicate a lack of cohesion and planning within our government. Would you comment on that, sir?"

NIXON: "Well, let me say that the incident is one which, as you say, has caused a great concern among many observers of the international scene, and of our own policy. I think that if we examine first, what was done, and then, what was said about what was done, that we can perhaps break the question into its proper aspects.

"Now, as far as what was done was concerned, the President of the United States ordering that a program be set up for conducting aerial reconnaissance

of the Soviet Union, a potential attacker of the United States and of the free world, I think most people have agreed that the President was justified in setting up such a program. Justified because we will recall that in 1955, the President at the Geneva Conference submitted his 'Open Skies' proposal to Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Bulganin, and that proposal was made for the purpose of protecting both the Soviet Union, the United States, and all other nations for that matter, from surprise attack.

"The Soviet Union has refused since that time to enter into any agreement whereby such flights as the U-2 made would be reciprocal. The President, therefore, felt that it was necessary for him, in order to obtain information which would alert the United States and the free world against any preparations for a surprise attack, to institute this program. And so these flights of reconnaissance planes, to which the President and Secretary of State Herter referred, have taken place.

"Now, let's go to the matter of the timing of the flight because you've raised that question, and I think very properly. People say, first, that they agree -- those who -- I don't mean that all agree even that we should have entered into this kind of a program at all, but I think the majority of the people would recognize the necessity for us to protect ourselves against surprise attack and this was the only way that we could get this kind of information.

"We in the United States, for example, present an altogether different problem to the Soviet Union. They do not have to engage in this kind of activity because we are in open society. This is the problem which is posed, of course, by a closed society."

SUSSKIND: "I think that, probably, sir, very little equivocation about our having this kind of program under these circumstances. It is the other

aspects -- the timing."

NIKON: "The timing -- well, let me talk about the timing a moment."

SUSSKIND: "Is it a goof, sir?"

NIKON: "No, it was not a goof. Let me say this. First of all, put yourself in the position of the President and of those who have responsibility for this program. The responsibility is a great one. The responsibility is to, one, get information and two, to be sure there is no gap in that information. We can no more afford, might I say, an intelligence gap, than we can afford a deterrent gap."

SUSSKIND: "Could we have afforded a two week gap here?"

NIKON: "Well, that ..."

SUSSKIND: "To make it comfortable for our President to arrive at the summit under the best possible circumstances?"

NIKON: "Let me put it this way again. As far as this particular incident was concerned, the flight occurred approximately three weeks before the summit conference. Now people say, 'Why didn't we have a recess at that period?' And my answer is this: 'When is the right time to make a flight?' Let's go back over the last year.

"Although it was not as important as the summit conference, certainly not nearly as important, some might have said, 'Well, you shouldn't have a flight like this at a time that the Vice President is visiting the Soviet Union.' I am sure that many would have said, 'Well, don't risk a flight like this at a time that Mr. Khrushchev is coming to the United States.' I am sure ..."

SUSSKIND: "Do you agree with that?"

NIKON: "No, I would not. I am sure that many others -- if I can continue I'll tell you why. I am sure that many others would say 'We shouldn't have

flights like this at a time that the President is visiting the uncommitted countries of Southeast Asia,' and others would say 'We shouldn't have flights like this at a time when the President is visiting the countries of South America,' and I am sure that people would say 'We shouldn't have flights like this and run any risk at a time that the President is visiting the Soviet Union.'

"The point I am trying to make is this: there is never a right time to make one of these flights if you're going to get caught.

"Now, there is never a right time, in other words, that you can select because we have to have a continuing program -- a continuing program, having in mind that -- the problem with which we are confronted. And so while I think a case can be made by the critics to the effect that these flights should have been discontinued, say one month before, the question is one month, two months, three, where do you draw the line?"

SUSSKIND: "Where overwhelming logic and diplomatic necessity would seem to indicate that a cessation might be in order for a limited period of time.

"I wonder about a second aspect of the flight, Mr. Nixon, and that has to do with the early response of our government that would seem to indicate that the decision on these flights, and particularly this flight, may have been a Pentagon decision, an Air Force decision or CIA decision, of which the President was not aware, and on which he was not fully posted.

"There were some early indications that the President was not cognizant of this particular flight, that later was backtracked on. Is the President, in your opinion -- knowledge -- fully conversant with this kind of intelligence operation and has he been over a sustained period of time?"

NIXON: "The answer is 'yes' to both questions."

SUSSKIND: "And I ask another thing, too. The early response of our government, where first we -- well, I suppose the only word is 'lied' -- and then we backtracked on the lie. Isn't this a damaging thing? I mean damaging to basic credibility of the American image around the world, to our allies and to the uncommitted countries?"

NIKON: "You know, strangely enough, I noted a columnist for the New York Times indicating the other day -- or at least suggesting -- that we made a basic mistake in admitting that we were involved in this kind of activity at all."

SUSSKIND: "That was Walter Lippman, I think."

NIKON: "And -- I think he's in the Herald Tribune. But be that as it may, it may have been Walter Lippman that I am referring to, but the point that I am making is this, that -- and this is a very key problem that you have raised -- it's the problem of what you do in an open society where you are engaged in activities like this, and you've got to do one of two things. One, you either ought to be silent or you ought to tell the truth. Now, let's look at the problem with which our people in the State Department were confronted when this information developed.

"They did not know that the pilot had been recovered and that they had obtained information from him or otherwise which made it imperative that we acknowledge that these flights had taken place. Now, some would say, 'Why, then, didn't we keep our mouths shut and say nothing and wait until we found out what they knew?'

"And here again we had the problem of the open society. We have newsmen in Washington. The newsmen descended upon the State Department and other officials in great numbers, as they had a right to, and they asked for the information. 'What about this?' and so under those circumstances it was felt

that the best thing to do was to engage, in effect, in what is usually engaged in where so-called espionage activities are undertaken -- evasive action. Evasive action so as to protect the pilot in the event that he had been captured and also evasive action so as to give the Soviet Union, Mr. Khrushchev, for example, an opportunity to accept the consequences of this flight without admitting, as he has had to admit, that it had been conducted for espionage purposes."

SUSSKIND: "I wonder, Mr. Nixon, though, if two fundamental questions don't underly the thing we're discussing right now. The first one is whether we can any longer, as a country that is the leader of the free world, whether we can any longer afford to equate the democratic process and the democratic way of life with confusion and stupidity?

"Some very reputable newspapermen of various political persuasions -- James Reston, Walter Lippman, The New York Times editorial section, have commented that this was a stupid piece of policy and a stupid piece of timing.

"Our answer to that, invariably, as a people and as a government, is that because it's a free society with the newspapermen descending upon you and so forth, that we are excusable on these counts because we are a democracy.

"Can we, in terms of the responsibility that sits on us so heavily and so inescapably, any longer afford to 'goof' in this way?"

NIXON: "Let me say this, that I do not agree with the critics who say we should have remained silent and that we should not have told the truth once it became inevitable that the Soviet Union -- Mr. Khrushchev -- knew what the truth was."

SUSSKIND: "May I ask two questions on that, sir?"

NIXON: "Yes, surely."

SUSSKIND: "Should we have lied, because that's what we did in the first instance?"

NIXON: "I think a grave question can be raised as to the advisability of the statements that were first made. On the other hand, may I just say in defense of those who have made those statements, Mr. Susskind, that I am not one to criticize them because I know the tremendous pressures under which they were operating. They had to make a snap decision at the moment, and it proved that -- it turned out that that decision was wrong. And in these kinds of activities we, of course, want to try to avoid mistakes if we can."

"History may record that this was a mistake. In my own opinion, speaking now of a policy generally, I would agree with you that we must maintain a posture of telling the truth when we do speak or of keeping silent."

SUSSKIND: "Well, why did we not, sir, fall back on that legendary and much revered tradition among nations of suggesting in a situation like this, of extreme national awkwardness, the response of, quote, 'we are investigating the situation,' which response is repeated periodically and finally nothing is ever said? This is the tradition of England and the tradition of France and all the great powers of yesteryear. Why did we find that not appealing for our purposes?"

NIXON: "Because we weren't dealing with the problems of yesteryear. We were dealing with the problems presented by Mr. Khrushchev and the Soviet Union, and he couldn't possibly let us get away with it. He had here, the pilot; he had the wreckage of the plane; he knew what was going on. And under the circumstances, had we sat back and said we were investigating, Mr. Khrushchev would have made us the laughing stock of the world. I think under -- in the days of we diplomacy of the past when we're dealing with France and with England and with traditional diplomacy of the 19th century, this might have worked. I don't think it'll work today."

SUSSKIND: "We probably haven't emerged in this situation as the laughing stock of the world, but perhaps as the crying stock in the world. And I think that a lot of us are very troubled about not only this incident, but what it presages for other such situations in the future. The confusion of it, the lack of response to it, the fumbling and the -- I use the word lie. You question the wisdom, but whatever it be, we were deeply wanting, it seems to me.

"You would agree to that in our response, at least, in the intelligence and planning of our response."

NIXON: "I again say that I will decline to criticize those in the State Department who had to make this decision at the moment. In retrospect I think all of us being Monday morning quarterbacks might have found different ways to handle it better. But having had to make tough decisions myself, as I'm sure you have at times, I realize that it's easy when you are faced with difficult choices, to make the choice that a majority of people may criticize."

SUSSKIND: "You know, sir I'm no sports fan. I have as little appetite for the Monday morning quarterback as you do, but I am desperately anxious to acquire excellent Sunday afternoon coaches. (Laughter). And I think that's what we need. I wonder who of you would comment about the astounding statement of Secretary Herter, lectured and endorsed by President Eisenhower, that it will hence forth be our avowed policy to fly over Soviet territory and using the territory of our allies as bases from which to launch and land such flights. Isn't this a stunning and dangerous development?"

NIXON: "Well, I think, perhaps, that we ought to qualify your assumption a bit. I don't think the Secretary said exactly that. I think you have implied that what the Secretary said was that we would launch these flights in the future from the bases of our allies. What he said was that we must continue to get information of this type, as I recall. Now, let me just say this ..."

SUSSKIND: "He also said -- forgive me, sir -- he also said, I'm positive because I read it three times that he -- it would continue to be our policy to conduct such aerial reconnaissance flights."

NIKON: "Well now, without raising a question about it, because I will assume your recollection of the fact was correct, and it very well may be.

"Let me say that I think that the position Secretary Herter was describing is one that puts the spotlight, as it should be, on the cause for these flights in the first place, and that is the fact that the world has no protection from surprise attack today. And that is why at the conference in Paris which is beginning tomorrow, it is vitally important that the leaders of the summit put surprise attack at the top of the summit agenda. Put surprise attack there so we can get this protection and so that flights such as Mr. Herter has described and such as have been undertaken in the past, will not be necessary in the future.

"And may I say this, when you say should we continue to engage in activities that will protect the security of the United States and the answer is, we have to. But my answer also is that this is not going to be by our choice. My answer also is that President Eisenhower will, supported by Secretary Herter, make every possible effort to get the surprise attack talks off of the dead center in which they have been for the last five years.

"And I might just add one other thing. We, all of us, talk about the U-2. There's a very exciting plus out of it, I think, purely apart of the information that we obtained which was important, very important. The plus is this: You realize that this flight clearly demonstrated the feasibility of the open skies proposal of the President. This demonstrates that unarmed planes can take photographs without causing any damage, any harm at all to commercial aviation or the national security of the country over which the flights are made. And

so, it seems to me, that we should take these flights as an example of what can be done in the future.

"For example, this same type of plane, the plane that has so successfully flown over the Soviet Union, can be used to fly over the United States, over the whole world. And once we have an agreement of that type between nations, then the problem with which you are concerned, of the United States unilaterally having to take these steps, protect itself, they no longer exist."

SUSSKIND: "Perhaps there could be very little quarrel that for the intelligence purposes needed in this era of secrecy, such flights are necessary, but I wonder about the potentially explosive and critically dangerous implications of the stated avowed policy that such aerial reconnaissance flights will continue.

"For example, no one need tell you, Mr. Nixon, about Mr. Khrushchev. You have met him, you have talked with him, you have debated with him. We have issued him a frontal challenge before the world that we will continue such flights. Your own comments about Mr. Khrushchev as a political personality, and as a man, seem to suggest that he cannot afford to take that lying down or passively, that he will rip up a crescendo of anti-American resentment and feeling because we have stated, in the forum of the world, that we will continue to send our planes over his territory violating his sovereignty. Have we not prodded him with pinpricks that could only bring forth a gusher of anger, revenge and retaliation?"

NIXON: "There's a very simple reaction that Mr. Khruschev can have under these circumstances and that is to break down this wall of secrecy which made this flight necessary in the first place. We constantly tend to berate ourselves for doing what is necessary to protect ourselves. We overlooked the fact that Mr. Khrushchev does not have to violate our air space because of his diplomats violate our ground space as you know, day after day, year after year."

"Now, under the circumstances, it seems to me, that again we have got to keep the spotlight on what is really the solution to this problem. Let's look at it the other way. Let's suppose that as a result of what has happened here, that we say, since this flight was discovered, the United States will now announce to Mr. Khrushchev, well, since this plane has been knocked down we're going to discontinue activities of this sort. Look at the position this puts the United States in."

SUSSKIND: "Do we have to announce anything, we send our apologies..."

NIXON: "Well then you're suggesting we discontinue the flights and not announce it."

SUSSKIND: "Yes, sir since you prod me, yes, sir. But I think when we hit him full in the face with an avowed stated policy that we will violate your sovereignty at will, and continuously..."

NIXON: "Maybe we're not so far apart then as I would think. My problem is this. The first responsibility of the President of the United States, as you and I think, you and I both agree, is to protect the security of this country and of free peoples everywhere from the devistation which would result from a surprise attack. Now, that is why these flights were

made in the first place. That is why an indication has been made that such activities may have to continue in the future. I think the point that you raise is the advisability of announcing that those flights be continued in the future.

"And I can only suggest that that announcement might serve this useful purpose of forcing this issue of open and closed society, forcing the issue of open skies into the forefront at the Summit conference. Because, let me say this. We can talk at the Summit conference about discontinuing atomic tests as we should talk about it; we can talk about programs for disarmament; we can talk about the problem of Berlin, but the overwhelming major problem confronting the world today, if we want to avoid a war which will destroy civilization itself, is the surprise-attack problem.

"And if as a result of this announcement, which you consider to be inept, it tends to bring this subject out for discussion, put in on the table there, so that President Eisenhower, Mr. Mac Millan, President De Gaulle, and Mr. Khrushchev can talk about it in its hard realities, I think a useful purpose could be served. We just can't continue to sweep under the rug this problem of what do you about surprise attack. For five years we've done nothing about it. It's time to do something about it."

SUSSKIND: "What about the potential of this statement blowing the Summit conference sky-high, creating an atmosphere there in which serious and peaceful and willing negotiation among the powers was rent asunder for the arrogance of our statement?"

NIXON; "Let me say this, Mr. Susskind. I am as concerned, as I know you are, about this conference, and as all people who are---who want peace, peace with freedom, are concerned about it. We want it to succeed."

"But let me add, you mentioned, a moment ago, that I had talked to Mr. Khrushchev. Now I don't pretend to be an expert on him as I'm sure he may not be an expert on me despite his recent reference to my being the goat in the cabbage patch; but on the other hand, I would say this, that as I see Mr. Khrushchev, and as I know him, I don't believe that this incident is going in itself to tear the Summit Conference apart. Mr. Khrushchev is a realist. Mr. Khrushchev is a man who is not a babe in the woods when it comes to, shall we say, espionage activity. He is a man who, of course, makes the most out of the propaganda opportunity when it's presented to him. But I think at the Summit Conference that we can and should expect him to sit down and talk with the president and his two colleagues frankly and directly and that the chances for progress have not been substantially diminished by what has happened. Now that's my own judgment and I know that many competent observers disagree."

SUSSKIND: "A quick comment, Mr. Nixon from you, sir. What would be your posture, whether necessary or unnecessary, if the Russians were conducting aerial reconnaissance over our country, it were discovered and our government shot the plane down and captured the pilot. And the Soviet Union stated that it would continue to send aerial reconnaissance over our country. Wouldn't you take at the very least a dim view of that?"

NIKON: "You know, many years ago Mr. Franklin Roosevelt used to have a favorite answer to press conferences when he would say, 'That's an If-ify question,' and then he wouldn't answer. Now in this case certainly I say-- may I tell you why I think this is a hypothetical question that really doesn't deserve an answer. Because this is impossible. We're an open

society. It isn't necessary for the Soviet Union to fly planes over the United States to find out what's in the United States. We even furnish them with the pictures ourselves and the President said in a meeting a few days ago, 'We furnish them in color as to what's going on here.' Now, my point then, is then, that the problem that we're confronted with here is altogether different, from the standpoint of the United States, from the problem that confronts the Soviet Union because they do have closed society. I can tell you from my own trip to the Soviet Union that obtaining information there is almost impossible unless you're in the air, I would say. And we know it's very different in the United States. And, so I submit to you, that while you can put this out as a hypothetical question, you would have to add, let's suppose that the United States were also a closed society, a great totalitarian state, and the planes flew over, and that supposition goes completely beyond the realm of possibility. So that's my answer to your question."

SUSSKIND: "Mr. Vice President, several more issues pertaining to the U-2 incident come to mind that I think are really important. Have we not by the statement that we shall continue such reconnaissance over Soviet territory--have we not placed our allies, Turkey, Pakistan, Norway--Japan is now deeply worried about it--in a desperately untenable position in the sense, that they are now faced with the alternative of violating the canons of international law or disavowing the United States. Isn't that a great danger to our cause, to our side?"

NIXON: "Well I come back again to my theme that the responsibility here rests squarely on Mr. Khrushchev. If he will participate in the very reasonable proposals that have been made by the President and our associates,

at this conference, for moving against surprise attack, the necessity for this, or any other kind of activity of this type will have been removed.

"Now you have mentioned our allies. They too have a stake in avoiding surprise attack. It isn't just the United States and they know this. And I would say that until we get through this conference, when we can take another look at it, that we should not jump to the conclusion that as to what our allies may feel about the situation.

SUSSKIND: "They've jumped to the conclusion..."

NIXON: "Oh of course..."

SUSSKIND: "...Mr. Nixon..."

NIXON: "...they have..."

SUSSKIND: "...and they're desperately worried. They lie under the muzzle of the Soviet ballistic missiles they--that's a strained phrase, I guess--they're in danger and they are alarmed and notes have been served upon their governments that should their bases and their countries be used they will be visited by a retaliation quick, and well, I guess, final. They want an answer from us. Failing to answer them satisfactorily, I think we may alienate them, giving them no choice, but to disavow us in this particular policy area. Is our State Department in your view, treating with that issue now; is the solution impending, an answer?"

NIXON: "The State Department is certainly concerned about this and is discussing the matter with our allies. And, I again, say that they will be watching this conference, as we will be watching it, to see what progress can be made with the Soviet Union on the problem of surprise attack so what we can remove the necessity for this kind of operation in the future."

SUSSKIND: "If no progress is made on the open skies approach, as

progress was not made previously, would we then, in your view, have to reexamine our policy of continued aerial reconnaissance in view of satisfying our allies that we have not placed them in incredible danger."

NIXON: "I would say that when a conference of this magnitude is being conducted, that I would not want to go so far as to indicate that, even by answering a hypothetical question, that I had no hope that progress could be made. I believe that this matter, this issue is of such importance that it will be discussed and that we should give the conferences every opportunity to discuss it before indicating hypothetically what we will or will not do if it should fail to deal with the issue."

SUSSKIND: "Mr. Nixon, another question that worries a good many people in this country. For 18 months, in Geneva, the three powers, United States, Britain and Russia, have been attempting to make progress on cessation of testing of atomic weapons. And strangely enough in the past few months quite substantial progress has been made. The key issue that has impeded us through the 18 months is the whole area of espionage, the hypersensitivity of the Soviet Union with respect to their borders being violated, their secrets being ascertained. And we have assured through painstaking efforts of James Wadsworth, over a sustained period, that we are trying to build walls of protection against espionage that would admit of progress on atomic testing cessation. Now an intricate system of permanent control posts and inspection teams has been almost agreed upon. Did not this incident, does not this new policy of continued aerial reconnaissance threaten the very substantial and critically important progress that has been achieved at the Geneva Conference.

NIXON: "Again, I think the conference at Paris will tell us a great deal as to what the answer to that question would be. I would also point out that as far as this incident is concerned that Mr. Khrushchev has indicated that he has known about these flights for a considerable period of time. If knowing of these flights, over a considerable period of time, he has yet instructed his representatives at Geneva to reach the agreement or at least the area of agreement to which you have already referred, it would seem to me that that would indicate that the fact that there was an open acknowledgement of the flight would not have appreciable effect in destroying the progress that had been made."

SUSSKIND: "If any setback in Geneva is a consequence of this incident, you would regard that as an unmitigated tragedy wouldn't you?"

NIXON: "I would, yes."

SUSSKIND: "Well, let. . ."

NIXON: "May I say that I don't believe that this incident will cause the setback to the test negotiations. I don't believe so because I think that those test negotiations stand on their own merits; they have been going on separately, as you know, from the surprise attack negotiations. The Soviet Union has shown a great desire to reach an agreement; we have shown a great desire to reach an agreement, and there may be other roadblocks to an agreement, but I don't believe that this incident in itself will have destroyed the possibility for an agreement."

SUSSKIND: "Mr. Nixon, I thought by way of summarizing our discussion on this issue, I would like to give you two short quotations and ask you which one you endorse.

"The New York Times editorial said the following: 'Intelligent activity is not an end in itself, but an arm of policies serving the national interest.' It went on to say that this incident at this time, (in its view, the New York Times) seemed to be a manifestation of protocol stupidity.

"On the other hand, Mr. Eisenhower at his ~~px~~ recent press conference said: 'The emphasis given to a flight of an unarmed nonmilitary plane can only reflect a fetish of secrecy.'

"Which of those two statements? . . ."

NIXON: "I agree with the second. I agree with the second. And I can speak with great feeling on that because I know about this flight and I also have considerable knowledge of the espionage activities that Mr. Khrushchev and his representatives have conducted in the United States and all over the world. We, of course, could have seized upon incidents of those type, as he has, to block the road to settlement of international differences. It seems

to me, if I may just quote Mr. Khrushchev, out of context, You recall when Mr. Powers, or at least when he alleged that, and I have no reason to doubt that this is the case, when he alleged that Mr. Powers was still living. He said that he was supposed to destroy the plane and he didn't. And then as I recall he said, the reason is that everything alive wants to continue to live. Now, this is a very, very sage and I believe true statement. But the fact that everything alive wants to continue to live will be motivating Mr. Khrushchev as well as the other leaders at the Summit, regardless of what has happened as the result of this U-2 incident, regardless of the criticisms that can be made. And I recognize that reasonable men can raise great questions about the advisability of what our first reaction was, the advisability of admitting anything at all, and some may question the timing. But I would say that as we look at this incident it served one useful purpose and that was to bring forcibly to the attention of the world the great danger that hangs over all of us; that is, war coming from surprise attack or miscalculation which would destroy the world. And Mr. Khrushchev, I can assure you, is no more interested in having Leningrad and Moscow and other cities taken out and we aren't having New York and Washington taken out. And these would be the factors that would be motivating him at this, at this conference, as it would be motivating us. And they will affect his attitude on Berlin; they will affect his attitude on tests, they will affect his attitude on the other problems with which he and we are confronted. Now, I'm not suggesting by this that this means that agreement, therefore, is inevitable. But I do suggest, that in today's world, incidents like this type that should, in times past, might have destroyed a conference altogether. In times past leaders might not have even come to a conference. That incidents like this can no longer have that effect and will no longer have that effect. Because he knows and we know that, as a matter of fact, we all

have to learn to live together or we're going to die together."

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SUSSKIND: "A final question and a short one, sir. Will you privy,
to the U-2 serial reconnaissance policy and did you indorse it?"

NIXON: "I was privy to it and I do indorse it."

SUSSKIND: "Thank you."

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SUSSKIND: "Mister Vice President, another issue on which a lot of Americans are troubled today concerns the announcement, just last week, about the resumption of underground nuclear testing. Again, that seems to be a product of exquisitely bad planning coming on the heels of the U-2 incident, not having forewarned even our allies of the announcement because we obviously caught Great Britain by surprise. And also the notion of resuming testing just a little ahead of, again the Summit meeting, seems to be indicative of consummate insensitivity to world opinion. Would you comment on that? On, again, the timing. First let's talk about the timing, then I'd like to ask you about the resumption itself."

NIXON: "Well let me say first that the -- I think you commented very effectively, and I disagree of course. First, with regard to the timing, the timing of this announcement was not designed to counterbalance the reaction to the U-2. Second, of course, as you know, the tests that are being resumed are not weapons tests."

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(Susskind asks about proximity of resumption of nuclear tests & U-2 incident)

NIXON: "Getting to your point of timing. You may question the timing, but the timing was not a result of choosing this particular time because of what had happened at, with regard to the U-2."

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